



DCH Team,

I hope everyone is doing well and that you and your families are staying safe and healthy.

Next week kicks off Public Employee Recognition Week (PERW), and Kelly Washington-Johnson and the Office of Human Resources team have been hard at work putting together a virtual itinerary to celebrate your accomplishments over the past year. This year's theme is "Working Apart, Reaching Success Together," underscoring your accomplishments and successes even in the midst of the COVID-19 public health emergency as most of you have worked remotely.

Please take the time to read our PERW article to better inform you about what lies ahead next week. Kelly and her team have a number of great activities and celebrations lined up, including virtual gatherings on both Thursday and Friday. We are looking forward to celebrating each of you for your dedication and commitment to the critical work of DCH.

Recently, Czarina Woods was promoted as our new director for the Office of Procurement. Czarina is a 14-year veteran in Georgia state agencies, having spent the past three with DCH, and we are very excited for her as she takes on this new role. In this month's edition, we profile Czarina and give you a brief glimpse into her journey to this moment in her professional life. Congratulations on your new role, Czarina.

Finally, April is Stress Awareness Month, and I think we could all use a few pointers on managing stress these days. I encourage you to take a look at this informative piece on managing day-to-day stress with a particular focus on "decision fatigue." We appreciate our partners with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities for assisting us in identifying this particular stress factor. Your wellness and safety are key to your professional development, and I hope you find the suggestions and tools in the article helpful.

As we continue to navigate COVID-19, I want to reaffirm our guidance that unless you are required to be in the office for on-site business activities, you should work remotely to help mitigate the spread of the virus.

On behalf of the ELT, thank you for all you do for DCH and the communities we serve.

Frank



DCH Spotlight – Team DCH – “The Spirit of Reconnecting”

Each month, *DCHNOW!* spotlights various offices and departments throughout the agency. This month, we decided to do something a little different and focus on YOU...our DCH team in its entirety. Although it may seem that we are continuously speaking to the difficulties of the previous year and all the challenges associated with the COVID-19 public health emergency, we have to acknowledge the resilience and tenacity of the entire team who continue to serve Georgians through DCH’s critical work. We salute each and every one of you.

As many of you know, May is a special time of the year when state employees are recognized and shown appreciation for their dedicated work and service to the citizens of our great state during Public Employee Recognition Week (PERW). This year, PERW will take place May 3rd through May 7th with a theme of, “Working Apart, Reaching Success Together!” This theme underscores the success and resiliency of our entire DCH team during the pandemic as many of you have worked remotely, while also continually exhibiting the agency’s core tenets: **Communication**, **Customer Service**, **Teamwork** and **Accountability** for all those we serve.

“Our team members have really powered through the past year; from having to possibly get used to a remote working atmosphere, to managing their day-to-day responsibilities on top of the additional challenges that came along with this change. It has definitely been a lot,” said Kelly Washington-Johnson, director, Office of Human Resources. “We thought it was important to celebrate our colleagues’ successes and celebrate how the team has stepped up and met those challenges. That is the main reason we decided to use this particular theme. Although many of us are working apart physically, we are still succeeding together because we all are continuing to work towards a common goal - to fully support the Georgians we serve.”

Extra care and thought went into the process of developing an itinerary for the week’s activities, and special consideration was given to discovering innovative ways to create an atmosphere of celebration and togetherness.

“Reconnecting is the goal,” continued Kelly. “Sure, we’ve had to get creative regarding the implementation of this year’s festivities remotely; however, we’re also aware that some team members may not have had the opportunity to connect with their colleagues

outside of work assignments. During this time, we'd love to see our DCH team bond beyond those parameters, and take a break to meet up for some virtual entertainment."

Each day of PERW will include activities focused on a particular theme. DCH team members can look forward to:

- Monday, May 3 – KICKOFF
- Tuesday, May 4 – GAME DAY
- Wednesday, May 5 – HEALTH & WELLNESS DAY
- Thursday, May 6 – VIRTUAL AWARDS CEREMONY
- Friday, May 7 – DCH GIVE-A-WAY DAY

And, with PERW kicking off next week, Kelly had a few additional words for all DCH team members:

"At the end of next week, we hope that all of you, regardless of level, will feel appreciated and further understand your value to the agency," she said. "You are very needed, and we couldn't accomplish what we do without each of you individually and collectively. You are a huge part of the DCH success story, and we are looking forward to celebrating you!"

For a complete list of activities planned for PERW, [please see below](#) – you may also click on the image to view a larger version online. To register for events (and for entry to win prizes), please also visit the PERW microsite on the DCH intranet [here](#).

We are looking forward to seeing each of you, and are excited about the upcoming week!



The graphic is a teal-colored poster for the 2021 Public Employee Recognition Week (PERW) event schedule. At the top left is a circular logo with the words 'TEAMWORK', 'ACCOUNTABILITY', 'COMMUNICATION', and 'COLLECTIVE SUCCESS' around a central swirl. To the right of the logo, the text reads 'WORKING APART, REACHING SUCCESS TOGETHER' in blue, followed by 'Public Employee Recognition Week' and 'May 3 - 8, 2021'. Below this is the title '2021 PERW EVENT SCHEDULE' in white on a teal background. The schedule is organized by day: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Each day has a list of activities. At the bottom, it says 'SIGN UP ON THE DCH INTRANET'.

2021 PERW EVENT SCHEDULE

Monday

- **Kickoff** | Celebration video of DCH past year accomplishments with the Commissioner
- Capture the Action Phrase to be entered into the Friday Give-A-Ways
- DCH Leadership Baby Contest- Participate to win a \$50 gift card

Tuesday

- **Game Day** | Participate in Various Virtual individual and team games
- Sign up on DCH Intranet
- All winners will receive a gift-card
- All participants entered into the Friday Give-A-Ways

Wednesday

- **Health & Wellness Day** | Participate & complete virtual activities such as yoga, food demonstrations, etc. via DCH Academy & the DCH Intranet
- Square Dance Challenge
- All participants entered into the Friday Give-A-Ways

Thursday

- **Virtual Awards Ceremony** | Celebrate your DCH Team at the Virtual Awards Ceremony with ELT at 1:00 PM
- All participants entered into the Friday Give-A-Ways

Friday

DCH Give-A-Way Day
Virtual Celebration - 11:00 AM

SIGN UP ON THE DCH INTRANET



Meet the Office of Procurement's New Director

Being a public servant is a role that comes naturally for **Czarina Woods**. For more than 14 years, she has worked for the state of Georgia in various capacities, the last being as a Category Manager for the Office of Procurement. When the role of director for the office opened up last year, she expressed her interest in taking over the duties of the previous director, and eventually secured the position in December 2020 after a competitive interview process.



"Within my career, I've always aspired to do something that would make a difference in people's lives, and whatever that work entailed, I wanted to make sure that it would touch people from every background and every walk of life," said Czarina. "Leading the Office of Procurement within DCH allows me to continue to do that. By overseeing the procurement of the various goods and services needed by the department to implement various programs, I have a greater awareness of the tremendous impact we have as an office on the lives of the Georgians we touch on a day-to-day basis."

For most procurements, Czarina and her team will work with or under the support of the Department of Administrative Services, which oversees purchasing services for the state. A few major initiatives that are currently in the works for the office include supporting the Claims and Provider modules for the Medicaid Enterprise System Transformation (MEST) project, developing the Pharmacy Benefit Manager module and issuing the Non-Emergency Medical Transportation request for proposal.

"I've been with DCH for almost three years, and in that time, I've gained so much knowledge that has really empowered me to successfully step into this role," continued Czarina. "I'm so very excited about this next chapter of my career!"

Outside of DCH, Czarina dotes on her family, and when time permits, her other love: writing. In February 2020, she published her first fictional novel, which is currently available on Amazon. Her second novel is currently a work in progress. She looks forward to continuing her work here at DCH within the Office of Procurement.

Congratulations on your new role, Czarina!



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT
OF COMMUNITY HEALTH

HAPPY ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS DAY!

Thanks for all you do for DCH!



Stress Awareness – Recognizing Decision Fatigue

Over the past year, you've probably noticed an uptick in articles highlighting stress, and its effects on physical and mental health. With April being Stress Awareness Month, the editorial commentaries continue to climb. Just recently, the [Washington Post](#) published an article underscoring a stress factor that many may have experienced, but didn't have a name for: decision fatigue.

Whether you are a parent caring for children, an adult caring for other adults, or even an individual struggling to try to care for yourself in the midst of an everchanging environment, you've probably found yourself having to make some choices that wouldn't normally have to be made. At any given time, it may seem as though another dilemma has arisen that forces you to "decide" while having to make those considerations with less than stellar options. And that is when decision fatigue may take over.

According to [Mental Health America](#) (MHA), decision fatigue occurs when one feels overwhelmed and drained by the number of decisions that need to be made. This fatigue applies to all decisions, not simply the larger or more difficult ones. For lack of a better comparison, think in terms of your "decision-making battery" running low – or perhaps it's drained completely. As also noted by MHA, decision fatigue "can be difficult to recognize, as we don't always think of little choices...as decisions." Clarity may only come when those "little choices" become more frequent and/or escalate to bigger choices that may require immediate action.

Think of it this way: how many times over the past year have you thought:

"If I have to make one more decision..."

"If I have to think about one more thing..."

"There are so many options...how do I know which one is best for me/my family?"

It's been a bit overwhelming, right?

Since the beginning of the pandemic, and with so many changing variables, some people are justifiably exhausted and feel like they don't have an additional ounce of energy, or even the mental capacity, to make one more decision – not for their children, not for their aging parents, not for their ailing relatives, and not for themselves. The "out" may gradually become to not make a decision at all. And believe it or not, no decision is a decision. Where is the reprieve?

Today, the greater option is to choose your mental health. Make that a priority. Although we are by no means medical or mental health professionals, we do care about our DCH team members. So, we are turning to the experts. Per MHA, which notes that decision fatigue is a symptom of stress, the organization offers three “brain break” strategies:

- **Take 15 minutes to listen to guided meditation**, or just lay down and close your eyes with some relaxing music in the background – anything that allows you to zone out for a bit and push all worries and decisions to the side is helpful.
- **Get sufficient sleep to reduce stress levels.** This means both enough sleep (7-8 hours each night) and high-quality sleep. The ideal sleep environment is cool, dark, and quiet. Try to keep a regular sleep schedule where you go to bed and wake up at the same time each day. If that’s not possible due to varying shift times, create a pre-bedtime routine, like journaling for a few minutes – having regular before-bed activities will signal your brain to get into rest mode.
- **Exercise to actively release stress**, even if it’s only 30 minutes a few days a week. It boosts your cognitive abilities as well – studies have found that people who are physically active tend to be better at zeroing in on important information while ignoring irrelevant information, leading to quicker and better decisions

Also, let this article serve as a reminder that DCH has an [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) (Company Code: **Georgia**) which offers many resources that could possibly help you make some of those decisions a tad bit easier. Also, for those desiring the assistance of a trained professional, the EAP will also help you find someone to talk to who is just right for you based on your personal criteria.

Additionally, our very own State Health Benefit Plan offers an [Unwinding Anxiety](#) program under our *BeWell SHBP* wellness benefits package. Unwinding Anxiety is an award-winning program that helps you identify your triggers, manage stressful episodes and completely change your relationship to stress. The 30-day program consists of 31 individual modules and short daily exercises to help you learn how your mind works and changes your habits around anxiety. You’ll learn how to switch gears the moment anxiety and other unwanted sensations arise, and ultimately change the thought patterns and “habit loops” that lead to anxiety.

Be well and take care of yourself DCH team!

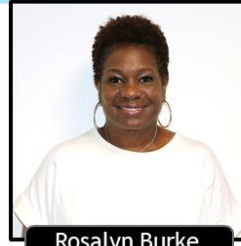
WELCOME DCH NEW HIRES !



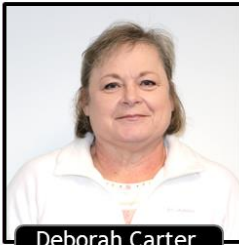
Delicia Barber
Medical Assistance Plans



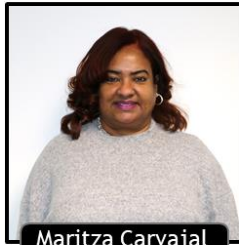
Swati Bhikot
HFRD



Rosalyn Burke
HFRD



Deborah Carter
HFRD



Maritza Carvajal
HFRD



Niki Davis
HFRD



Patricia Newsome
Financial Management

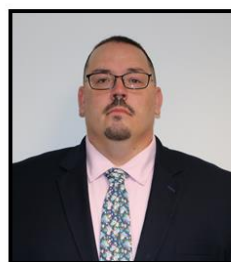
WELCOME DCH NEW HIRES!



Tyra Bass
Healthcare Facility Regulation



Sylvia Copeland
Healthcare Facility Regulation



Nicholas Shultz
Office of Inspector General



I'sha Williams
Medicaid Assistance Programs



COVID-19 Reminders

Get the latest updates on [COVID-19 and vaccines](#).

For COVID-19 screenings and personalized care plans for minor health conditions like cold, flu, or sinus problems, [complete an e-visit](#). To talk to an advice nurse 24/7, call 1-855-512-5997.

COVID-19 Vaccine Myth Busters

True or false? Click to learn more.

- [A mRNA vaccine can change your DNA.](#)
- [You can get COVID-19 from the vaccine.](#)
- [Scientists cut corners to develop the COVID-19 vaccine quickly.](#)
- [If you've had COVID-19, you don't need a vaccine.](#)

Get the facts about the COVID-19 vaccine at kp.org/COVID.

Yoga at the Battery Atlanta is back! Open to all!

Join the fun! No-cost yoga classes meet Monday evenings at 6:30 pm in the Plaza (non-gamedays and weather permitting). The classes are open to everyone. Make sure to register before attending as social distancing guidelines will be in place.

The yoga classes are also live-streamed on [The Battery Atlanta Facebook Live](#). If you can't make it or tune in, watch all the recorded yoga sessions on the [YouTube channel](#)!

Don't forget water and a mat! We look forward to seeing everyone there!
[Get more information and register today!](#)



New! Click to Chat with Kaiser Permanente Member Services

Now on kp.org and the Kaiser Permanente app, you can chat directly with member services and receive personalized, digital support without making a phone call!

[Click to chat](#) for questions about coverage and copays, plan changes, billing, and more!

[Get started today.](#)



Your Kaiser Permanente 2021 Wellness Program

Our investment in you

EARN
UP TO **\$1,000**
per household



Get yourself screened

Receiving appropriate health screenings — based on your age and gender— is one of the five steps needed to complete your 2021 Wellness Program. Each member and covered spouse who completes the Kaiser Permanente Wellness Program is eligible to receive a \$500 reward card, up to \$1,000 per household.

[Get the details](#)

Get Calm, the #1 app for meditation and sleep

Calm is designed to help lower stress, reduce anxiety, and more. As a Kaiser Permanente member, you can access all the great features of Calm at no additional cost. [Get the Calm app today.](#)



Blueberry banana “ice cream”¹

While ice cream is a favorite treat, it’s high in sugar, fat, and calories which can increase your risk of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and other health conditions.

This low-fat, low-calorie recipe is also sweet and smooth, but replaces added sugar with nutrients.²

Bananas are full of vitamins and minerals, and contain high levels of vitamin B6, vitamin C, and potassium, which can lower blood pressure.³

Blueberries are rich in fiber, vitamin K, and vitamin C. These nutrients may help boost your heart health, digestion, and brain function.⁴



Anthem   SHBP
State Health Benefit Plan
A Division of the Georgia Department of Community Health

INGREDIENTS

3 frozen bananas

½ cup frozen blueberries

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

PREPARATION

Blend the above ingredients and then serve.

Time-saving tip: Double the recipe and freeze the leftovers so you’ll have a healthy treat available.

¹Trinity’s Kitchen: *Easy Blueberry Blender Nice Cream with only 3 Ingredients* (accessed October 2020): trinityskitchen.com

²Healthline: *Is Ice Cream Good for You? Nutrition Facts and More* (accessed October 2020): healthline.com

³Healthline: *11 Evidence-Based Health Benefits of Bananas* (accessed October 2020): healthline.com

⁴Healthline: *10 Proven Health Benefits of Blueberries* (accessed October 2020): healthline.com

Healthy Breakfast Tips for April

Eating breakfast can kick-start your metabolism, improve your concentration, and help manage your weight. Try these healthy breakfast options!

- Whole-wheat bagel with cream cheese and hard-boiled egg
- Scrambled eggs with toast and mango slices
- Greek yogurt with granola and raspberries
- Shredded wheat with low-fat soy milk
- Eggs, turkey bacon, and cantaloupe

Are you pairing your latte with a hearty morning meal? Use the Sharecare app to track your healthy eating habits. When you make healthy choices, you will be “living in the green.” Get started by visiting **BeWellSHBP.com/Breakfast** !

Be Well SHBP

BeWellSHBP.com/Breakfast

888-616-6411